



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE DRUG SMUGGLING INVESTIGATION LEADS TO CONVICTION, LIFE SENTENCE OF LOCAL MAN**

*Michigan man receives mandatory life sentence following third conviction*

DETROIT — A Michigan man received a mandatory life prison sentence today following his conviction for conspiring to possess with the intent to distribute more than eight pounds of heroin, announced U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, Eastern District of Michigan, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Samuel Dennis Grooms, 47, of Clinton Township, was sentenced today by Chief Judge Bernard A. Friedman, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, to one count each: attempted possession with intent to distribute heroin, and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute. Grooms' conviction carries a mandatory life sentence without the possibility parole because of his two previous federal narcotics convictions.

ICE special agent began investigating in August 2002 after a 37 year-old woman, and her 17-year-old niece, both residing in Houston, Texas, arrived together into the United States at the Miami International Airport, via Cali, Colombia. The juvenile female was escorted from the flight by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspectors in a wheel chair due to her pregnancy. During a secondary examination, about 8.8 pounds of heroin was discovered concealed in a false compartment in the suitcase carried by the juvenile.

The U.S. Attorney declined prosecution of the juvenile female due to her age. However, ICE Miami and U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agents conducted a controlled delivery of the heroin from Miami to Detroit. A controlled delivery involves allowing contraband merchandise to continue being transported to its final destination while under law enforcement surveillance and control.

The 37 year-old woman was checked into a Detroit hotel where agents waited for Carlos Clark, 31, of Detroit, to arrive. Clark entered the hotel room and attempted to leave with the suitcase when ICE and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) special agents apprehended him. The ICE investigation revealed that Groom was the intended recipient of the heroin, which was 91 percent pure with an estimated street value between \$2 million and \$10 million.

“Drug trafficking drives criminal activity. The cooperative and outstanding efforts of federal law enforcement, from Miami to Detroit, who interdict and keep the streets free from this type of harm should be commended,” said U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. “This defendant, a lifelong drug dealer is exactly what the “Three Strikes Law” was written for.”

“With each arrest, conviction and sentencing of drug smugglers, we help make our communities a little safer,” said Brian M. Moskowitz, ICE Detroit special agent-in-charge. “Today there’s at least one drug smuggler who will be permanently removed from our streets.” Moskowitz heads the ICE Office of Investigations for the states of Michigan and Ohio.

A jury convicted Grooms Jan. 20, 2004 following a federal trial in Detroit. This is the third conviction for Grooms, which carries a mandatory life sentence.

Carlos Clark was also charged with one count each of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, and attempted possession with intent to distribute. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to three years probation.

CBP and DEA assisted with this case. Patricia Uetz of the Controlled Substance Unit, U.S. Attorney’s Office, Eastern District of Michigan prosecuted this case.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*